

Commonwealth of Kentucky

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

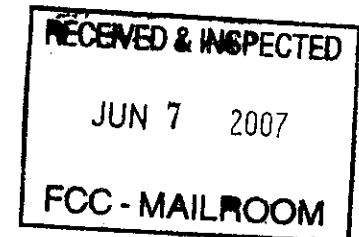
JODY RICHARDS
20th Legislative District
817 Culpeper Street
Bowling Green, Kentucky 42103-0902



SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

STATE CAPITOL
Room 309
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601
(502) 564-3366

June 5, 2007



Chairman Kevin J. Martin
Federal Communications Commission
Room 8-B201
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

WC Docket No. 05-337
CC Docket No. 96-45

Re: Proposed Cap on universal service support

Dear Chairman Martin:

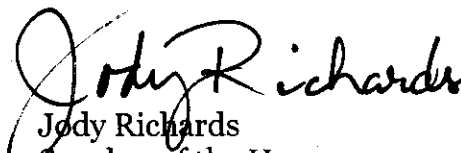
As you know, the Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service has recommended that the Federal Communications Commission adopt an interim cap on high-cost universal service support for competitive eligible telecommunications carriers. As the Commission considers this proposed cap, I urge you to proceed cautiously to ensure that rural residents in need of expanded access to wireless communications are not adversely affected.

One of the important goals of Universal Service, as mandated by the 1996 Act, is to increase access to advanced telecommunications services to rural consumers at rates comparable to those paid in urban areas. This goal is particularly important for Kentucky where many citizens still reside in rural areas with limited access to state-of-the art wireless and broadband services. Expanding access to high quality and affordable wireless technology is essential to the economic development of our rural areas, as well as safety and mobility of rural residents. Without necessary resources for the expansion and upgrade of rural wireless networks, rural consumers will not be able to enjoy these benefits at the level they deserve.

While curbing the rapid growth of the Universal Service fund in order to reduce costs to customers is a legitimate goal, I am concerned that accomplishing this goal through the proposed cap may unfairly burden rural residents. Any cap on universal service support to particular carriers must be carefully evaluated for its impact on rural areas of the country still waiting to enjoy the level of advanced telecommunications now taken for granted by most Americans. I also urge you to take an approach to addressing the rapid growth of the fund which is fair and equitable to all telecommunications providers without regard to the underlying technology. I believe that you will be able to identify proposals which are both competitively neutral and promote the continued expansion and improvement of much needed services in rural areas.

Please contact my office if you have any questions about this matter.

Sincerely,



Jody Richards
Speaker of the House